

593 'The sense of strict inviolability of personal rights carries over to personal services. Never did a husband order his wife to do anything outside of her proper domain. While I lived with them, in spite of the excellent care they gave me, even to the point of anticipating my wishes in a great many cases, never did a husband request his wife to prepare food for me. He asked her if she would, acting merely as my messenger. No closer relationship can exist than between maternal uncle and nephew, yet even he does not feel free to ask any service of his nephew, nor to take the latter's personal property.

DIVISION OF LABOR

462 Sexual dichotomy in economic activities is clearly defined. In a
562 general way, it may be said that the rougher, harder, and more dangerous work belongs in the province of male activity and that there is no task which calls for strength or danger that properly belongs in the realm of woman's activity. Should any woman be engaged in a hard or dangerous piece of work and a man happens to be present there is a tacit assumption of the task by the latter. Hunting and fishing and presumably the act of fighting in war are man's tasks. The gathering of roots, fruits, seed, and their preparation belongs to the women. It is interesting to note that the gathering of honey, which entails some risk, is done by the men. The making of canoes, the making of implements, of hammocks, the activities in making camp are all in man's domain. The preparation of food and the making of pottery and basketry are woman's tasks.

HUNTING AND FISHING

224 Hunting and fishing are male occupations exclusively. As soon as
868 the young boy is able to toddle about he is made to play with bow
857 and arrow and learns to make these indispensable tools. It is a common sight to see little boys who are too young to be taken along by the men on hunting expeditions playing at the game of hunting; and when a man is in camp busily preparing his hunting equipment his young son is by his side working industriously on miniature bows and arrows.

225 The equipment of the hunter is simple. Bow, arrow, and canoe are
411 indispensable. A Yaruro does not like to roam on land, but there
501 is no need for him to do so since he can get his game in the water-courses or along their banks. So he sets off in the early morning, generally accompanied by his hunting companion, to look for crocodile (*Crocodilus babu*). He will hunt for other forms of life only reluctantly, having a special liking for crocodile meat.

Because of the shyness of crocodile the hunter is most often forced to shoot at it from a distance. Since an arrow will seldom kill one

CANOES

[481]
SD1
SD2
868

The Yaruros dislike to travel any distance afoot. The canoe, therefore, is practically his only means of transportation. As a result, they are extraordinarily good canoeists, learning both how to build and to manage one from childhood. It is not an uncommon sight to see little children of 5 or 6 years of age paddling furiously in midstream. Their expertness can best be illustrated by the following incident: The llanos are exposed to the trade winds in the dry season, which at times blow very hard. On our return from La Urbana we found the crossing of the Orinoco to the mouth of the Capanaparo a dangerous undertaking.

The Yaruro dugouts are clumsy affairs at best, but in addition to that, ours had a gaping hole about 10 inches in diameter in the stern and it was with some qualms that I stepped into it to negotiate the rather rough waters with the help of a 12-year-old boy. Since the Yaruro steers from the bow, that place of honor was allotted to the youngster, I furnishing the power. During the passage across I despaired several times of being able to hold the canoe in the right direction, but whenever we found ourselves caught in some especially difficult whirlpool this lad would turn and laugh, not in derision but in encouragement, which was calculated, I suppose, to bolster my spirit, but helped not at all in easing the strain on my arms. His knowledge of the currents and his proper timing in signaling to me to paddle one way or the other, as well as deft steering, finally got us across safely. When this incident was over and I looked back over the rough waters, my respect for Yaruro canoeism increased manifold.

502
177

Sails are used on the Orinoco and its tributaries, both by the occasional traders and crocodile hunters. The Yaruros have had ample opportunities over several centuries to learn how to make use of them. In fact, some of the younger men who worked occasionally for the ranchers, or traders, do know how. However, in their daily plying up and down the rivers, hunting and fishing, they never employ the sail.

[181]

Their conservatism is further illustrated by another fact. The Racionales will always pole their canoes when traveling upstream. The Yaruros know how to do this also, but only when they are working for someone else. In their everyday life they depend entirely on the paddle.

502
000

The steersman generally sits in the bow, especially when moving downstream and the paddler is alone, pulling the canoe after him. The paddler in the stern, if one is present, really furnishes the motive power. The Yaruro generally paddles sitting down in the bot-

602 "sweetheart", "potential wife". At any rate, the boy learns that
[582] members of the former class he can not marry, and that one, a particular one of the second class, will become his wife. Thus on those who stand in the familiar relationship he cannot cast sexual thoughts.

836 Intersexual activity before marriage was not observable and it seemed as if there would be little opportunity for it. Boys and girls are kept separate, the girls staying with their mothers, the boys with the men. At night there seemed to be the same division.

854 During infancy there is no organized play for the girl. Her
861 parents do not play as we are wont to do. She is not teased into
[855] laughter, but tender care is given to her. She is fed, cleaned, kept in the shade, and made to wear ornaments. Dolls of clay may be made for her. During this period she is taken everywhere by the mother.

From babyhood she participates in the collection of food, in its preparation and cooking, in the making of basketry, pottery, making and breaking camp, traveling in canoes, but always with her mother.
• 868 Gradually she learns to take a more active part in the female tasks. The important point is that the proper decorum for her is to keep to members of her own sex. She does not become a tomboy. If she learns to perform tasks it is only because the women are supposed to have a smattering of them anyhow. Paddling is one of these.

854 The boy's life is first shared with his mother, and although fondled
593 by the father, he remains with the mother until he is able to walk and paddle. Thus, whereas the girl never comes under the direct influence of her father, the boy is under the direct influence of the mother during his infancy and babyhood. Gradually he participates more and more in manly tasks, but as a matter of fact he never entirely disassociates himself from his mother. As long as he is unmarried he performs tasks for his mother and she takes care of him, performing such acts as cooking, delousing, etc. He gathers wood, lights fires, etc.

864 The children are not kept in sexual ignorance. At least the boys
831 seem to learn something of the sexual functions at an early age. From what I observed of Yaruro camp life, it seems that no attempt was made to keep knowledge of sex and sexual functions away from the children. In the first place, there is no sense of modesty so far as the sexual parts are concerned, and therefore there is no ignorance on the part of the children. There is very little, if any, sexual play among the adults during the day. Since the attitude toward the sexual parts of the body is one of indifference there is very little that may happen which would indicate any interest in those parts. Any knowledge that the children may have of sex must, therefore, be gathered from observation of their parents.

221 Finally, the Yaruro deny any considerable long-term oscillations in the
262 environment and consequently in the resources. The extremes, particularly the minima, of habitat factors which regulate food and population balances, according to Liebig's Law, fall within narrow limits and again elicit no special institutions of management or of equilibrium maintenance to compensate for them, as in the case of the potlatches of the Northwest Coast of America, the buffalo hunts in the Great Plains of the United States, or the use of pigs in Melanesia.²³

VI

868 One more point may be made regarding the ecology as limiter of chieftainship among the Yaruro. The tools, techniques, and resources require no very extensive, highly specialized or esoteric knowledge. In fact any man or woman, and any child as well, has access to such knowledge, and it is easily acquired by all members of the society who thus have, at least potentially, equal access to control over the means of life. There is no specialized knowledge, at least with respect to technology and habitat, which requires a specialized repository in the form of a chief or learned person. Yaruro knowledge, itself dependent upon the inventory of tools, techniques, and resources, inhibits any tendency towards the development of any sort of specialists in technical or managerial knowledge. As one might expect, there are no true specialists in Yaruro society. Here and there women make pots and certain women seem to have a special bent for making woven sacks but these are not properly specialties. Nor, from a technological or ecological point of view, is male or female shamanism in any way a speciality. They do not appear to be specialists even in esoteric knowledge. Knowledge of the general type described here might be called 'dispersive' or 'egalitarian' since it tends to become more or less uniformly distributed among the members of the society. A consequence of the existence of this type of knowledge, associated with the kind of technology described, is that there will be no specialised training of any specialists and, of course, no specialised personnel to do such training. This is the situation which obtains among the Yaruro both with respect to technical and managerial activities. Thus, in Yaruro knowledge, there is no source for the support of an institutionalized and strong chieftainship.

VII

221 In one respect, the ecology encourages chiefly functions. A balance is struck
241 between the cultural resources, the possibilities that the habitat affords for their
361 production, and the length of time that areas of land can be exploited. This is
622 particularly true of the horticultural lands since they can no longer be used after three years of cropping, and it becomes necessary to move on. The result is that there is a slow migration of resource areas, chiefly of horticultural areas across the tribal territory. The lands in cultivation move further and further from any given village until a point of suspension is reached at which the walking and working

²³ Cf. Suttles, 1960 a, 1960 b; Llewelly and Hoebel, 1941; Vayda, 1961; Vayda, Leeds, and Smith, 1961.